

Representative
**Jeannie
DARNEILLE**

27th District

2002 Session Report



May 2002

Dear Neighbor,

With all the negative headlines about “government” in the newspapers and on television these days, I think it is sometimes easy to forget that our country is home to the best system of government in the world.

It is also easy to forget what “government” really is and how it works for us.

I see our government at work every time I hear a firefighter or a police officer rushing to the scene of an accident. It’s working when I see children and teachers at school or ships coming into our world-class port. When apartments are built for low-income seniors or billboards that discourage young people from smoking are posted, I see government at work. When buses carry people to jobs and convoys of military-reservists head to Yakima for training, I am assured that government is working. That work is still around us, impacting every community.

Government is a partnership between people, communities, and our state. While nobody can disagree that improvements can always be made, I believe we can be proud of what our government stands for and what it tries to do for you and for every citizen of our state.

Sincerely,

Jeannie Darneille
State Representative
27th Legislative District



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and phone number:**

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Transportation

After several years of handwringing in Olympia, we finally passed an historic 10-year, \$7.7 billion transportation plan to improve road safety and relieve traffic congestion across our state.

The plan includes a nine-cent increase in the gas tax — introduced over a two-year period — and a combination of other fees to generate a \$7.7 billion investment in our state's transportation system.

Of that amount, \$5.5 billion will be spent on congestion-relief and road safety on state highways, and \$1.8 billion will be earmarked for transportation choices including buses, rail, and passenger-only ferries. An additional \$330 million is dedicated for local projects in cities, suburbs and rural communities. This plan will save lives, ease gridlock, speed up the delivery of goods to and from our markets and ports, and create thousands of new jobs statewide.

Personally, I believe legislators are elected to make tough decision on taxes and other major issues — and so I voted to pass this bill in Olympia. However, since there was not enough support from House members to get the required majority, the proposal will go before you and other citizens this November for your consideration.

If approved, the gas-tax increase will cost the average driver approximately \$4.50 a month — or \$50 a year.

Regional transportation proposal

Recognizing that the transportation needs of the Puget Sound area are greater than in other parts of the state, we passed another law that allows Pierce County and other Puget Sound citizens the opportunity to decide specific transportation projects here in our region.

If the county-council members so decide, our three-county region's citizens could vote on additional, region-specific transportation improvements.

Prescription-drug reform

One proposal to make prescription drugs more affordable for Washington citizens would have changed the way our state provides prescription-drug coverage to its employees, to low-income people, to injured workers, and to prisoners.

The reform would encourage the use of the most clinically necessary and cost-effective drugs. This would make our state a more effective purchaser of prescription drugs. Further, the right drugs would get to the right people at the right time.

Unfortunately, there were just too many unanswered questions to pass the bill this session. But with ever-growing state health-care costs, prescription-drug reform will be at the top of our 2003 legislative agenda.

Legislative Session highlights

For the first time since 1998, the Legislature completed its work and adjourned on time.

Going in, everyone said we'd be lucky just to pass a budget. Well, we did pass a budget that addressed the \$1.6 billion hole created by the recession and other increased costs in education and health care. But we accomplished far more than that.

• Civil-service reform.

After 20 years of struggle, we finally passed a common-sense law that allows state employees to collectively bargain with the governor for wages and other working conditions. Also, some services now performed strictly by state employees will be opened to bid by private companies.

• Abandoned babies.

This bill addresses the growing problem of newborns being abandoned, often resulting in their tragic death. A parent may now leave a newborn with appropriate hospital personnel for care without fear of prosecution.

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• Domestic-violence victims.

This bill on behalf of all victims of domestic violence is a major victory. Before, if victims of abuse or stalking had to leave their jobs to escape, they could not receive unemployment benefits. Now they are entitled to receive the benefits they need to help rebuild their lives.

• Emergency contraception.

Hospitals that provide emergency care are now required to inform sexual-assault victims about emergency contraception — and then provide the treatment if the patient wants it.

Treatment will not allow a fertilized egg to attach in the uterine lining and will preclude unwanted pregnancy as another consequence of the assault.

• Credit scoring.

A top priority for consumer groups, we limited the use of credit reports by insurance companies when the companies are determining who gets auto insurance and how much they will pay.

• Family leave.

To help people balance their work and family responsibilities, workers may now use their earned sick leave to care not only for themselves and their children, but also for other loved ones such as spouses, parents, and grandparents.

• Safe schools.

This anti-bullying and anti-harassment bill requires that each school district adopt a policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Victims of bullying often experience serious psychological harm, including a drop in grades, an increase in anxiety, and a loss of friends.

• Drug-sentencing reform.

Supported by all segments of the law-enforcement community, this will help break the cycle of addiction and save hundreds of millions of tax dollars in future criminal justice. The drug-sentencing reform focuses on drug treatment and increases the penalties for selling drugs to children.

• Access to clean syringes.

I sponsored this bill to reduce the spread of bloodborne diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. Now that the governor has signed the legislation, pharmacies may participate in the distribution of sterile syringes and needles to injectors — and increase access to information about drug-treatment programs and safe-disposal techniques.

• Low-income housing.

The Washington Housing Trust Account and county housing authorities got a shot in the arm with a new law that requires auditors to collect a small additional fee when recording real-estate documents.

The fee will be divided between the trust and the local authorities — and it will be dedicated to providing housing for the very low-income.

Whether we live in the city, suburb, or countryside, the importance of our community can never be stressed too much.



Representative
Jeannie DARNEILLE

27th District

**The 27th District
says farewell and
thank you to
Representative
Ruth Fisher**

We owe Ruth Fisher our gratitude for her many contributions as a public servant. After nearly 20 years of service to Pierce County and the whole state, she has decided not to seek re-election.

We all owe Ruth Fisher our gratitude for her many contributions. She is a recognized expert on transportation issues, and has been a tireless advocate for our county. Her wisdom and her well-known wit will be deeply missed by her colleagues and her constituents alike.

We wish her well.



**Community
meeting**



Senator Debbie Regala and I hope you'll come and share your thoughts in a community meeting later this spring. It is an honor to represent you, and we look forward to talking with you.

What: Town Hall

When: 7 p.m., Tuesday, May 28

**Where: Jason Lee Middle School
cafeteria**

This meeting is an opportunity to ask questions, share concerns — and make your voices heard! The agenda for the meeting will be driven by the interests of the community.

See you then and there!

**Representative
Jeannie Darnelle**
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